

ACCEPTANCE BOOKLET

TERMS AND CONDITIONS



TOWN CLOSE SCHOOL

NORWICH'S FINEST PREP SCHOOL • FOR GIRLS & BOYS • 3-13 YEARS

POLICY AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADMISSIONS, DISCIPLINE AND EXCLUSIONS (PARENT CONTRACT)

This policy applies to all pupils at Town Close School including those in EYFS

1. Definitions

(a) In these terms and conditions

“Acceptance Form” means the forms, including the Form of Acceptance, Parent’s Declaration of Consent, Medical Record and Administration Record, provided by the School for parents to complete when accepting a place for their child at the School;

“Child” means a child of whatever age admitted by the School to be educated;

“the Complaints Procedure” is the School’s procedure for handling complaints from parents, as amended from time to time for legal or other substantive reasons or in order to assist the proper administration of the School. A copy of the procedure is available on the School’s website.

“acceptance deposit” means the sum set out in the offer letter;

“fees” means the fees set out in the Schedule of Fees as amended from time to time;

“the Pupils’ Disciplinary Code” is the School’s procedure for dealing with unacceptable behaviour;

“Head” means the person appointed by the Governors of the School to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the School, including anyone to whom such duties have been duly delegated;

“School Rules” means those which are outlined within our Behaviour Management Policy which can be found on our website. The School Rules may be amended from time to time for legal or safety reasons or in order to assist the proper administration of the School;

“The Town Close Way” refers to our School values. A copy of the current version of which is provided to each child on entry and is sent to parents with the letter offering a place at the School.

“term” means a term of the School as notified to parents from time to time;

“a term’s notice” means notice given not later than the first day of the term preceding the term to which the notice relates;

“terms and conditions” means these terms and conditions as amended from time to time;

“we” or the “School” means the legal entity carrying on as the School as identified in Clause 1(b) below, or its duly authorised representative, as the context requires;

“you” or the “parents” means each person who has signed the Acceptance Form as parent or guardian of a child or who with the School’s written consent has signed the Acceptance Form or subsequently assumed parental responsibility for such child.

(b) The Acceptance Form, the Schedule of Fees, the School Rules, the Complaints Procedure, the Pupils Disciplinary Code and these terms and conditions constitute the terms of a contract between you and Town Close Educational Trust Ltd. It is not intended that the terms of the contract shall be enforceable by your child or by any other third party.

2. Acceptance and acceptance deposit

(a) An offer of a place for your child at the School is accepted by you submitting the duly completed Acceptance Form and paying the acceptance deposit.

(b) The acceptance deposit is refundable after any outstanding accounts have been settled when your child leaves the school.

(c) Once the acceptance form has been duly completed and the acceptance deposit has been paid you will be subject to the notice requirements as outlined in clause 4.

3. School Fees

(a) All the costs incurred in the usual course of the education by the School of your child, including the provision of any necessary educational materials, shall be met by the fees unless otherwise notified by the School.

(b) Any extra-curricular activities such as private music lessons, trips and visits in which you agree your child may participate shall be deemed to be supplemental to items met by the fees and charged for accordingly.

(c) Each person who has signed the Acceptance Form is liable for the whole of the fees due and any supplemental charges. The persons who have signed the Acceptance Form remain liable to the School for the whole of the fees and supplemental charges due, unless the School has agreed in writing to look exclusively to any other person for payment of the fees or any part of them.

Where two parents have signed the Acceptance Form, one of them may withdraw from the contract with the School by submitting a term’s notice provided they have obtained the prior written consent of both the School and the remaining parent.

If your child has been awarded a bursary, your liability will be for the amount of fees due after taking account of that award. An award may be withdrawn with immediate effect if, in the opinion of the Head, your child’s attendance, progress or

behaviour no longer merits the continuation of the award but any such withdrawal of an award will not operate so as to increase the fees due in respect of a term which has already commenced.

(d) Each invoice must be paid in full on or before the first day of term.

(e) We reserve the right to refuse to allow your child to attend the School or to withhold any references while fees or supplemental charges remain unpaid. We may make an interest charge of 2 per cent per month or part month.

(f) The fees will be reviewed from time to time and may be increased by such amount as the School considers reasonable. For the avoidance of doubt all fees will be subject to the appropriate rate of VAT in force from time to time. We shall endeavour to give at least a term’s notice of any increase in the fees due for a particular term and in any event shall give you notice of any such increase not later than the final day of the preceding term.

(g) Fees and any prepaid supplemental charges will not normally be reduced as a result of absence due to illness or otherwise.

(h) During the first term of Nursery we offer children the flexibility to attend for a minimum of 3 full days or 5 mornings which is reflected in the fees. From the second term full payment of fees will be invoiced, however parents do have the option for their child not to attend certain days should they wish.

(i) Parental Responsibility and Court Orders

The Parent will notify the Head immediately of any parental responsibility agreement, undertaking or court order relating to the Pupil (e.g. residence, contact, prohibited steps, specific issues or periodical payments) and send the Head a copy of the same. In the absence of any such court order, the School will treat each person with parental responsibility as having equal rights to receive relevant information about the Pupil on request (unless in the Head’s considered view it is not in the Pupil’s best interests to do so).

In signing any form of consent requested by the School, the Parent or person with whom the Pupil lives is responsible for ensuring that all other consents required by law have been obtained.



4. Notice Requirements

- (a) If you wish to:
- (i) withdraw your child from the School (other than at the normal leaving date, that being at the end of Year Eight); or
 - (ii) withdraw your child from an activity charged for as supplemental;

you shall either give a term's notice to that effect or shall pay to the School a term's fees or, as the case may be, a term's charges for the activity that your child has ceased to participate in, in lieu of notice, at such rate as would have been charged for the next term of provision.

In cases where notice is not given, the appropriate sum in lieu of notice will become due and owing to the School as a debt on the first day of the next term.

- (b) You acknowledge that the School's affairs are organised on a termly basis and that it is not possible for you to reduce the amount of fees due or to obtain a refund of fees by withdrawing your child or by your child's ceasing to participate in an activity part-way through a term.

5. School Rules

It is a condition of remaining at the School that your child complies with the School Rules as amended from time to time. In particular you undertake to ensure that your child attends School punctually and that your child conforms to such rules of appearance, dress and behaviour as shall be issued by the School from time to time. The full uniform list can be found within the Parent Handbook.

6. Disciplinary Procedures

- (a) The Head may in [his/her] discretion require you to remove or may suspend or, in serious or persistent cases, expel your child from the School if [he/she] considers that your child's attendance, progress or behaviour, including behaviour outside school, is seriously unsatisfactory and in the reasonable opinion of the Head the removal is in the School's best interests or those of your child or other children.
- (b) The Head may in [his/her] discretion require you to remove or may suspend or expel your child if the behaviour of you or either of you, is in the opinion of the Head unreasonable and affects or is likely to affect adversely the child's or other children's progress at the School or the well-being of School staff or to bring the School into disrepute.

(c) Should the Head exercise [his/her] right under sub-clause 6(a) or 6(b) above you will not be entitled to any refund or remission of fees or supplemental charges paid or due and the deposit will be forfeited. However, in such circumstances fees in lieu of notice will not be payable.

(d) The Pupils' Disciplinary Code and the School Rules set out examples of offences likely to be punishable by suspension or expulsion. These examples are not exhaustive, and in particular, the Head may decide that suspension or expulsion for a lesser offence is justified where there has been previous misbehaviour. All aspects of the pupil's record at the School may be taken into account.

(e) The review of serious disciplinary matters is governed by the Complaints Procedure and the Pupils' Disciplinary Code.

7. The School's Obligations

(a) Subject to these terms and conditions, the School undertakes to accept your child as a pupil of the School from the time of joining the School until the end of his or her preparatory schooling.

(b) While your child remains a pupil of the School, we undertake to exercise reasonable skill and care in respect of his or her education and welfare. This obligation will apply during school hours, from 8.00am – 6.00pm, and at other times when your child is participating in activities organised by the School.

(c) In order to fulfil our obligations, we need your co-operation, in particular by: encouraging your child in his or her studies, and giving appropriate support at home; keeping the School informed of matters which affect your child; maintaining a courteous and constructive relationship with School staff; and attending meetings and otherwise keeping in touch with the School where your child's interests so require.

(d) We undertake not to subject your child to corporal punishment, and to ensure any physical contact is appropriate for the maintenance of good order, your child's safety or otherwise. Unless you notify us to the contrary, you consent to your child participating, under proper supervision, in contact sports and in other normal sports and activities which may entail some risk of physical injury.



(e) If your child requires urgent medical attention while under the School's care, we will if practicable attempt to obtain your prior consent. However, should we be unable to contact you we shall be authorised to make the decision on your behalf should consent be required for urgent treatment (including anaesthetic or operation) recommended by a doctor.

(f) Although our published materials describe the broad principles on which the School is presently run and are believed to be correct at the time of publishing, they do not form part of the contract between you and the School. We reserve the right to make changes to any aspects of the School, including the curriculum or the manner of providing education for your child (including by providing such education remotely whilst your child remains at home, for example, where the School is required to close the School premises), and we reserve the right to do so. We will give parents a term's notice of any significant changes at the School including changes in the curriculum that we regard as significant to your child and where practicable will consult with parents on such changes.

(g) We shall monitor your child's progress at the School and produce regular written reports. We shall advise you if we have any concern about your child's progress but we do not undertake to diagnose dyslexia or other specific conditions. A formal assessment can be arranged either by you or by the School at your expense. You may be asked to withdraw your child without being charged fees in lieu of notice if, in the opinion of the Head, the School has made all reasonable adjustments that it can/are possible and that it considers that no further reasonable adjustments are available.

(h) It is the custom and practice of most independent schools, and of this School, to include some photographs or images of pupils in the School's promotional material such as the prospectus, website and in the School's use of social media and other communications such as the newsletter. We would not disclose the full name or home address of a child without the Parents' consent.

For further information regarding the School's use of photographs, please see our Privacy Notice which can be found at townclose.com/about/regulatory-information

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact the Bursar on 01603 620180 or by emailing bursar@townclose.com



8. The Parents' Obligations

- (a) It is a condition of your child's joining the School that you complete and submit to the School a medical questionnaire in respect of your child. You undertake to inform the School of any health or medical condition, disability or allergy that your child has or subsequently develops, whether long-term or short-term, including any infections. If the School so requires due to a health risk either presented by your child to others or presented to your child by others or by reason of a virus, pandemic, epidemic or other health risk, you undertake to keep your child at home and not permit him/her to return to the School until such time as the health risk has been averted. In such circumstances we shall endeavour to continue providing education to your child remotely during such period (including, for example, by sending you/your child work assignments electronically).
- (b) You undertake to inform the School of any situations where special arrangements may be needed in relation to your child.
- (c) The School will be entitled (unless notified otherwise) to treat any communication from any person who has signed the Acceptance Form as having been given on behalf of both such persons. Unless other arrangements are agreed between you and the School we shall be entitled to treat any communication from the School to any such person as having been made to both of them.
- (d) The Head must be informed in writing of any reason for your child's absence from School. Wherever possible the School's prior consent should be sought for absence from the School.
- (e) We cannot accept any responsibility for the welfare of your child while off the School premises unless he/she is taking part in a school activity or otherwise under the supervision of a member of the School staff.
- (f) If you have cause for concern as to a matter of safety, care, discipline or progress of your child you must inform the School without delay. Complaints should be made in accordance with the School's Complaints Procedure.
- (g) Unless you notify us to the contrary, you consent to your child travelling on a coach or minibus, or occasionally in taxi or private vehicle organised by the School, for games/outings whilst a pupil in this School.
- (h) Any property belonging to your child, including any items (for example, salto wristbands, library books, text books, iPads etc) which are issued to your child by the School are your child's responsibility. If any such property is lost or damaged you will be responsible for, and/or liable for the cost of, replacing such property.

9. How we may use Personal Information: References, Confidentiality and Data Protection

We value the personal information that is entrusted to us by pupils and parents, and recognise that it is extremely important that we uphold that trust in the way in which we handle, use, store and protect personal data.

Further details of how we process and handle personal data can be found in the School's Privacy Notice which is available at townclose.com/about/regulatory-information.

10. Insurance

You must make your own insurance arrangements if you require cover for your child's property while at School.

11. Confidentiality and References

You consent to our supplying information and a reference in respect of your child to any educational institution which you propose your child may attend. Any reference supplied by us shall be confidential. We will take care to ensure that all information that is supplied relating to your child is accurate and any opinion given on his/her ability, aptitude for certain courses and character is fair. However, we cannot be liable for any loss you are or your child is alleged to have suffered resulting from a reference or report given by us.

12. Changes in Ownership etc

For the purposes of constitutional changes to the School or amalgamation we reserve the right to transfer the undertaking of the School to any other natural or legal person, and to assign the benefit of this contract in connection with any such transfer, and/or to amalgamate the School with any other educational institution.

13. Communications

All notices required to be given under these terms and conditions must be given in writing. You undertake to (i) confirm (or update, if necessary) when requested, such information about you and/or your child that is held by the School and (ii) in any event, inform the School of any change to you or your child's circumstances or to the information about you or your child, that has previously been notified to the School including relevant contact details. You undertake to notify the School of any change of address of any person who has signed the Acceptance Form. Communications (including notices) will be sent by the School to the address shown in its records. Notices that you are required to give under these terms and conditions must be addressed to the Head and sent or emailed to the School's address. If sent

by first class post, notice shall be deemed to have been given on the second day after posting.

14. Interpretation

Headings in these terms and conditions are for ease of understanding only and do not form part of these terms and conditions.

15. Cancellation

- (a) The School shall be entitled to cancel this agreement forthwith by notice in writing without prejudice to its other remedies and without any obligation to return any deposit or fees paid to you if you are in material breach of any of your obligations under this or any similar agreement with the School and have not (in the case of a breach which is capable of remedy) remedied the same within (14) days of a notice from the School requiring it to be remedied (including for the avoidance of doubt persistent non-payment or material default under these terms and conditions). For the purposes of illustration only (and without limitation), the following circumstances would typify what the School is likely to regard as a material breach entitling it to terminate this agreement: (i) failure to pay any fees or supplemental charges on time on more than one occasion; (ii) you (as opposed to your child) acting in such a way as to give the Head cause to expel your child under Clause 6 (b) of this agreement; (iii) any other circumstance where your child is expelled from the School in accordance with the terms of this agreement (including the School Rules); and (iv) failure or refusal to complete and submit to the School a medical questionnaire in respect of your child.
- (b) Either party may cancel this agreement forthwith by notice in writing without prejudice to its other remedies if the other (in your case) is unable to pay its debts or is declared bankrupt or (in the School's case) becomes insolvent or goes into liquidation or receivership or administrative receivership or is wound-up for any reason.
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, this agreement shall end at the end of your child's schooling.

16. Force Majeure (i.e. circumstances beyond our control)

- 16.1 In this agreement “force majeure” shall mean any cause beyond a party’s control (including, for the avoidance of doubt, acts of God, war, riot, civil commotion, compliance with any law or governmental order, rule, regulation or direction (including that of a local authority), accident, fire, flood, storm, pandemic or epidemic of any disease, terrorist attack, chemical or biological contamination).
- 16.2 In the event of a force majeure arising which prevents or delays the School’s performance of any of its obligations under this agreement, the School shall forthwith give you notice in writing specifying the nature and extent of the circumstances giving rise to the force majeure. Provided that the School has acted reasonably and prudently to prevent and/or minimise the effect of the force majeure, the School will have no liability in respect of the non-performance of such of its obligations as are prevented or delayed during the continuance of the force majeure. The School shall use its best endeavours during the continuance of the force majeure to provide educational services (including by providing appropriate educational services remotely).
- 16.3 Subject to Clause 16.2, if the School is prevented from performance of all of its obligations as a result of force majeure for a continuous period greater than six months, the School shall notify you of the steps it shall take to ensure performance of the agreement and you shall then, following receipt of such notice, be entitled to cancel the agreement on written notice and without giving a term’s notice or paying fees in lieu.
- 16.4 Subject to Clause 3(g), in the event that your child is unable to attend (or is likely not to be able to attend) the School due to reasons of his or her severe ill-health or physical impairment caused by a force majeure you shall give the School notice in writing of such circumstances and the following provisions shall apply:
- (a) you shall, in consultation and cooperation with the School, use all reasonable endeavours to:
 - (i) mitigate the effect of the force majeure in order to continue to perform the obligations under this agreement in any way that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances (such that your child can still participate and benefit from the provision of education by the School, including for example participating remotely); and
 - (ii) resume the performance of the obligations as soon as reasonably possible;
 - (b) in circumstances where, following the efforts made and steps taken under Clause 16.4(a), your child is not able to participate and benefit from any level of provision of education by the School then you shall not be liable for non-performance of your obligations (including the obligation to pay fees, pro-rated accordingly) during the continuance of the force majeure; and
 - (c) in the event of the force majeure continuing to prevent your child from attending the School or being able to participate and benefit from any level of provision of education by the School for more than six months you shall discuss with the School a solution by which this agreement may be performed and, following such discussions, you shall be entitled to cancel the agreement on written notice and without giving a term’s notice or paying a term’s fees in lieu.

17. Consumer protection

- 17.1 Care has been taken to use plain language and to give clear explanation in these terms and conditions. If any words alone or in combination infringe the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contract Regulations 1999 or any other provision of law, they shall be treated as severable and shall be replaced with words which give as near the original meaning as may be fair.
- 17.2 If you entered into this contract by means of distance communication (i.e. by post, fax or e-mail) or off premises, you have fourteen (14) calendar days to cancel the contract under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013. To exercise the right to cancel, you must inform the School of your decision to cancel the contract by a clear statement (e.g. a letter sent by post, or e-mail). You may use the attached Cancellation Form, but it is not obligatory.
- 17.3 If at any time you receive a request via email to make a change to any of your account details, or informing you of a change to our account details, or asking you to transfer funds please DO NOT respond to the email but inform the Bursar immediately.

18. Jurisdiction and Governing Law

The contract between you and the School as set out in these terms and conditions is governed by English Law. You agree with us to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

19. Variations

We reserve the right to make change or add to these terms and conditions from time to time for legal or safety reasons or in order to assist with the proper delivery of education at the School. The School will give you at least a term’s notice of any such modifications.

CANCELLATION FORM



(Complete and return this form only if you wish to cancel the contract ref.)

To: Town Close School
14 Ipswich Road
Norwich
Norfolk
NR2 2LR

I/we hereby give notice that I/we wish to cancel my/our contract

Reason:

Cooling Off Period (see clause 17.2)

Signed:

Date:



THE TOWN CLOSE WAY

Our aim at Town Close is that everyone:

Cares for our School

Acts positively, honestly and tries their best

Respects others in what they say and do

Enjoys and celebrates achievements

Supports others when they need help



PUPILS' DISCIPLINARY CODE

Every effort is made to reward positive behaviour. However, from time to time, disciplinary action has to be taken in cases of unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour may range from a relatively minor breach of the day-to-day school rules (attached) to behaviour that affects the health, safety, or general well-being of another pupil or the pupil concerned. Different responses are called for, depending on the type of misbehaviour, and the age of the child concerned is also always considered. The following are the disciplinary measures used by the staff to discourage bad behaviour in the School.

- 1. Informal action by staff:** All staff may guide pupils about expected behaviour, deliver a verbal reprimand or refer a pupil to a teacher or teaching assistant if a minor sanction is appropriate, such as requiring a pupil to undertake a small job to make amends for their actions. No records are kept of informal action.
- 2. Warning:** In cases where unacceptable behaviour is either persistent or more serious, pupils will be told what behaviour is expected and clearly warned that if they are unable to meet this expectation, they will be excluded from the activity/lesson/break in which they are participating and may also receive another sanction. A digital record of the warning is made.
- 3. Formal sanction:** Pupils are excluded from the activity/lesson/break for the remainder of time left and looked after appropriately elsewhere. They may also be given a further sanction, such as an act of community service, missing a future activity/break or serving a detention (Prep pupils). A digital record of the formal sanction is made. In cases of serious wrong-doing pupils go straight to this step and may be referred directly to a senior staff member.
- 4. Parent Consultation:** Instances where staff issue warnings or formal sanctions are recorded on the School's management information system. This monitoring of patterns of behaviour aims to help children successfully to address any issues that may be adversely affecting their or others' well-being or progress. In cases where records indicate persistent poor behaviour or where there has been serious wrong-doing, parents may be called in. Records are kept of the discussion and any further review meetings held.

- 5. Suspension/Required Removal/Expulsion:** The Head may in their discretion require you to remove or may suspend or, in serious or persistent cases, expel your child from the School if they consider that your child's attendance, progress or behaviour, including behaviour outside school, is seriously unsatisfactory and in the reasonable opinion of the Head the removal is in the School's best interests or those of your child or other children.

PAYMENTS

We are pleased to be able to offer you a number of different ways to pay school fees and any other incidental expenses including registration and acceptance fees. The information below should be all you need to make payments but please contact us if you have any further queries, or refer to the 'Payments' section of our website.

Bank Transfer:

Account Name: Town Close Ed. Trust Ltd

Account Number: 22091003

Sort Code: 40-51-62

SWIFTBIC: HAND GB 22

IBAN: GB06 HAND 40516222091003

Card Payments:

Payments can be made by debit/credit card via the 'Payments' section on the School's website.

Monthly Direct Debit (for school fees ONLY):

For more information about School Fee Plan, or to apply to pay by monthly direct debit, please visit the 'Payments' section of our website.

Cheques:

Please make cheques payable to 'Town Close Ed. Trust Ltd'

Please note, in order to comply with the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, we cannot accept payment for termly fees in cash.

FEES AND VARIABLE EXPENSES 2024/2025

Termly Fees

We try our best to ensure that the majority of costs associated with sending your child to Town Close School are included in our termly fee. For instance, no extra charges are made for lunches, books, non-residential trips or for most after school activities and include a personal accident insurance scheme. The termly fees for the 2024/2025 academic year are:

Nursery	£3,737
Reception, Year One and Year Two	£4,848
Year Three to Year Eight	£5,668

If applicable, please refer to our 'Charging and Admissions Policy for those in receipt of Early Education Funding' which is available on our website: townclose.com

After School Care Charges

The after school charges incurred from Monday to Friday, between 3.45pm and 6.00pm, are as follows:

PRE PREP

Tea is served between 4.00pm and 4.30pm

Pre-booked in advance (by noon)

3.45-4.30pm	£4.50
3.45-5.00pm	£8.00
3.45-5.30pm	£12.00
3.45-6.00pm	£15.50

Not pre-booked

3.45-4.30pm	£6.00
3.45-5.00pm	£12.00
3.45-5.30pm	£18.00
3.45-6.00pm	£24.00

Please note: we charge a flat rate of £16.00 for bookings not cancelled by noon on the day.

PREP

A snack is served at 4.00pm

Pre-booked in advance (by 2pm)

4.00-5.00pm (or any part thereof)	£6.50
5.00-6.00pm (or any part thereof)	£6.50
4.00-6.00pm	£13.00

Not pre-booked

4.00-5.00pm (or any part thereof)	£8.00
5.00-6.00pm (or any part thereof)	£8.00
4.00-6.00pm	£16.00

Please note: these higher charges will also apply to children who are booked into ASC, but do not attend, and to children who are transferred to ASC at 4.30pm.

Individual Music Lessons for Year One to Year Eight

We are fortunate that there are a number of self-employed professional teachers based at Town Close School who can offer tuition on the piano, guitar, voice, violin, cello, flute, clarinet, oboe, saxophone, recorder, trumpet, horn, trombone, euphonium, cornet and drums – subject to them having availability on their lists. We actively encourage as many children as possible to learn to play an instrument as the long-term benefits are without question.

The visiting music teachers undertake to provide 30 lessons per annum divided between three terms – some terms may have 12 lessons and others may only have 8. The fees, however, are spread equally and have been fixed at £210.00 per term.

PARENTS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A complaint is considered to be any matter or concern about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action from the School.

The School would much rather hear of any concern early. Concerns may be communicated to form/class teachers, tutors, Heads of Department, or members of the Senior Management Team, as appropriate. It may be best to start with the person most closely involved with the issue and to raise matters with the class teacher (Year 4 and below)/Tutor (Year 5 and above). When they are matters to do with sports or music, for instance, it might be best to raise the concerns with the Head of Department. These members of staff may be able to resolve the matter quickly, without recourse to any further process. However, they may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example the Head of the Pre Prep or the Prep Department Deputy Head. This may be more appropriate when the concerns relate to bullying, pastoral matters or are to do with the care and supervision of children. Even in cases where staff are able to resolve the issue, they will notify the Headmaster of any serious concerns or complaints received. Town Close welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously any concerns they may raise.

A record is kept by the School of all formal complaints, including action taken by the School as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). This is kept for at least three years. Any correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act requests them. Separate records are also kept of concerns which reach the Head (either directly or by his being notified by another member of staff) which generally require action on the School's behalf even though the concern may not have been expressed as a formal complaint. One complaint was received under the formal complaints procedure during the 2016/17 academic year which was amicably resolved at Stage 2.

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so.
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way.
- Parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously.
- We take action where appropriate.

All complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible and at least within five working days, if received during term, and as soon as practicable if received during holiday periods.

If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the following procedures:

STAGE 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally in the ways described above before parents feel it necessary to make a formal complaint.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Deputy Head, Head of Pre Prep or the Head, will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher/tutor, unless the Head of Department, Deputy Head or the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher/tutor will make a written record of all concerns potentially serious enough that the Head will need to be notified and all complaints including the date on which they were received. Should a complaint not be resolved within 5 working days, or in the event that the appropriate member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

STAGE 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. Such letters should be sent to the School
Town Close School
14 Ipswich Road
Norwich
Norfolk
NR2 2LR
Otherwise they can be sent via email:
head@townclose.com
- The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet or speak directly to the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision. The complainant will be notified of the decision as soon as possible, within a maximum of 28 days.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
- Any written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of Governors will call for a full report from the Headmaster and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman or Deputy Chairman may also call for a briefing from members of staff and will, in most cases, meet with parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chairman or Deputy Chairman is satisfied that, so far as practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The complainant will be notified of the decision as soon as possible, within a maximum of 28 days.

If parents are still not satisfied, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure..

STAGE 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. If the Chairman of Governors has already been involved in considering a complaint against the Headmaster, it will be referred to the Deputy Chairman of Governors.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Chair of Governors (or Deputy Chairman of Governors where appropriate), on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 2 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel

will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 working days of the Hearing

- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made. The findings will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Governors and Head.
- Where a dispute is still unresolved, the School will provide parents with the name and address of a certified alternative dispute resolution ('ADR') entity, in accordance with The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 ('the ADR Regulations'). Such ADR practitioners would be competent to deal with any unresolved dispute, should both parties wish to engage in ADR.

Habitual or Vexatious Complainants

In the unlikely event of habitual or vexatious complaints, the School will deal with this in accordance with the parental contract Paragraph 6 (b).

General

Nothing in this policy affects an individual's statutory rights.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents may wish to take their complaint to OFSTED or The Independent Schools Inspectorate. In which case they are advised to contact these organisations at the following locations:

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Tel 020 7600 0100

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2DW
0300 123 1231

Document Control

V.12 June 2024



TOWN CLOSE SCHOOL

NORWICH'S FINEST PREP SCHOOL • FOR GIRLS & BOYS • 3-13 YEARS

townclose.com | 01603 620180